

September 7, 2000

TRIBUTE TO MR. RAY G. SMITH,
AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL
COMMANDER

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2000

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, Ray G. Smith.

Ray will be sworn in as the National Commander of the American Legion at their annual convention today. No one is more deserving of this honor than Ray G. Smith. As a 45-year member of the American Legion, he has steadily gained the respect of Legionnaires all across the country.

Like me, Ray grew up in Johnston County, North Carolina. He joined the Air Force in 1951 and saw active duty during the Korean War. He served in the 20th Air Force, 19th Bomb Wing at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam, where his specialized training in engineering required him to spend much of his time during the war traveling throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Ray's military service did not end when he left active duty in 1955. He spent four years in the active Air Force Reserves and was honorably discharged in 1959. On September 7, 1955, the day after he was discharged from the Air Force, Ray became a member of the American Legion. Since then, he has risen steadily through the ranks. Ray has held numerous offices at the post, district, department and national levels, including North Carolina Department Commander in 1979 and National Vice Commander in 1988.

Ray's campaign for National Commander has taken the better part of two years and sent him all over the country. Being named National Commander of the American Legion is an enormous responsibility, but Ray's dedication and years of loyal service have proven that no one is more capable or worthy of this high honor. Only the second North Carolinian to serve as national commander, Ray will oversee an organization that has grown to 2.8 million strong since it was created by Congress in 1919. As National Commander, one of Ray's main duties will involve working with us here in Congress to ensure that those who have sacrificed so much for our country receive the benefits they have earned.

As a veteran of the United States Army myself, I look forward to working with Ray and all members of the American Legion on issues that are important to veterans. As we celebrate Ray's swearing in today, let us each take a moment to honor our veterans. For each of us, freedom is a way of life, a legacy left to us by our nation's founders. This freedom is costly. America owes veterans a debt of gratitude for their sacrifices. It is the service of these genuine American heroes that has helped make this country great.

Mr. Speaker, no one is more qualified to represent and lead these heroes than my friend Ray G. Smith.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE "YES WEEK" SUMMER CAMP FOR DETERRING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2000

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, today I honor and draw attention to the YES Week Summer Camp which was sponsored by High on Kids. High on Kids is a wonderful program started by the Lower Dauphin School District's community advisory committee on drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

YES Week was held at Camp Sertoma in Linglestown and Memorial Lake in Lebanon. Almost forty children took part in this exciting program. The YES Week camp teaches young people that life is worth living through adventurous activities without drugs and alcohol.

The fine students who attended this camp climbed and rappelled walls, negotiated high-wires and canoed down the mighty Susquehanna River. They learned through team-building exercises that much can be accomplished if they work together. Our young people need to learn that life is full of amazing and exhilarating adventures. When they learn that there is so much to live for, drugs and alcohol lose their power.

On Thursday, August 10, I had the pleasure of seeing this camp first hand and meeting with the young people who made a choice. They made a life-saving choice not to do drugs and to join with fellow students in something much greater. These young folks should be very proud of themselves for their determination to succeed and not to give into the temptations that lead to poisoned bodies and ruined lives.

America needs more programs like this. Programs where adults demonstrate leadership by doing. This is a vivid example of how children can learn life-lessons by adults guiding them and shaping their lives. Many volunteers made this camp possible. Our thanks go out to them for their service to the community.

I would like to recognize these young people for their determination to achieve success and to refuse drugs and alcohol. They are Juan Alejando, Jose Aleman, Thomas Barger, Jeremiah Bechtel, Kaleo Billet, Tyler Boehmer, Kaitlyn Brown, Eric Buck, Maggie Boyd, Lindsay Cale, Sara Cale, Brian Davis, Michael Day, Joseph Decembrino, Amanda Ebersole, Amanda Fahnestock, Laura Fahnestock, Dierra Fahnestock, Abby Fosnot, Jenna Gerhardt, Jamie Hall, Alex Hannold, Samuel Hansen, Matthew Hoerner, Lawrence Jack, Dominique Krow, Andrew Mattei, Matthew Mattei, Adam McClucas, Daniel Mullarkey, Ashley Oswald, Brian Pagano, Kelsey Roth, Adam Thomas, Joshua Thomas, Meredith Thomas, Nicholas Vickroy, Richie Vickroy, Jennifer Winters, and Bobbie Wreski.

I am very proud of you all. I know the entire House of Representatives joins me in congratulating this outstanding group of young people from Harrisburg for saying no to drugs and YES to life.

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A TRIBUTE TO SHERIFF RONALD E. HEWETT

HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2000

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sheriff Ronald E. Hewett of Brunswick County in the great state of North Carolina. Sheriff Hewett was recently named Sheriff of the Year for eastern North Carolina. This award was given to him in recognition of his outstanding service to the North Carolina Sheriff's Association on behalf of the citizens of Brunswick County.

Beginning on his twentieth birthday in 1983 when he became the youngest certified Law Enforcement Officer in North Carolina, Sheriff Hewett has dedicated his entire career to protecting and promoting the rights of others. While continuing to work full-time as a law enforcement officer in Brunswick County, Sheriff Hewett completed his education at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and graduated in 1985 with a degree in criminal justice. Not long afterwards, he was promoted to uniform Patrol Sergeant in 1987 and rose in the ranks to become a lieutenant in 1990. He was then placed in charge of establishing the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program for Brunswick County and was named United States DARE officer of the Year in 1993 for his outstanding leadership.

Since his election as Sheriff in 1994, Sheriff Hewett has fought hard to make Brunswick County a safer place to live and work for those who call it home. He has made combating illegal drugs and domestic violence two of his top priorities. Under his leadership, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office has arrested over twelve hundred individuals for 2,300 narcotics charges and established the county's first Domestic Violence Unit.

In addition, Sheriff Hewett has also been recognized for his selfless service to the community with the establishment of a volunteer Buddy Program at the Bolivia Elementary School. As a result, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office was named by Governor Hunt as one of the most outstanding volunteer agencies in the state in 1998.

President John F. Kennedy once said, "For those to whom much is given, much is required. And when at some future date when history judges us, recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state, our success or failure, in whatever office we hold, will be measured by the answers to four questions: First, were we truly men of courage . . . Second, were we truly men of judgment . . . Third, were we truly men of integrity . . . Finally, were we truly men of dedication?"

Brunswick County Sheriff Ronald Hewett will truthfully be able to answer each of these questions in the affirmative! He is indeed a man of courage, judgment, integrity, and dedication. Sheriff Hewett, may God's strength, joy, and peace be with you and your family as you continue your service and commitment to your fellow citizens.